

Region II Comprehensive Center
Metropolitan Center for Urban Education
Steinhardt School of Education; New York University

INCREASING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

For the past several years, the Region II (New York Technical Assistance Center), in collaboration with the New York State Education Department, has been offering parents and school/community leaders from low performing schools, the opportunity to participate in the PARENTS CURRICULUM BASED PROGRAM. The program provides parents and parent-leaders with the opportunity to attend and participate in a series of meetings that focus on areas/issues of interest to parents and their children. Among the topics addressed during the four sessions are those related to: standards, assessment and instruction. Parents are guided to look for these elements as they appear in their children's homework. Parent leaders who are members of *School Leadership Teams* are encouraged to support high standards/expectations and professional development in their *Comprehensive Educational Plan*.

Parents and school community leaders are guided through the *New York State Standards* and test draft samplers. In the area of *assessment*, they identify and recognize the need to support their children in becoming familiar with key components of the instruments of assessment, e.g., multiple choice, short/extended responses, and rubrics:

Participants receive local, state, and national resources that enable them to recognize the higher *expectations*, raised *standards* and new forms of *assessment* that are challenging for students. Parents also appreciate receiving the information, web sites, and guides that enable them to better fulfill their roles as partners and/or school community leaders. They welcome resources and information that give them the means to make informed decisions as members/leaders of PA/PTA, and School Leadership Teams.

Our accomplishments and results are clearly evident in that parents who attend our sessions are more aware of the varied roles/opportunities they may fulfill at home, at school, and in the school community (see Joyce Epstein, Johns-Hopkins). Over the past several years, with the introduction of legislation related to School Leadership Teams and the writing of the Comprehensive Educational Plan, we have witnessed a marked increase in the levels of awareness, knowledge and skills that parents have in order to make informed decisions. We plan to continue providing technical assistance and support to strengthen parents in fulfilling their diverse roles as partners at home, at school, and in the school community.

Our plans for the next 12 months include continuing and *expanding* the content of the program as it relates to ***No Child Left Behind*** legislation. More specifically, we will make parents aware of the options they have related to failing schools. We will provide resources, information and guidelines that clarify issues concerning: eligibility; supplemental services; choice options, and transportation. In addition to our work in New York City, we will work with the Big Four Cities (Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, and Yonkers) in New York State.